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To the Sir Knights of Texas:

Can you believe that it's almost Christmas? It can't be! It seems like only yesterday when I was putting our decorations back into the attic. Christmas is a special time at my house. Becky makes sure that the inside is decorated, and I must say that she does a beautiful job. We have three Christmas trees in our house. The big tree in the corner by the fireplace is home to our antique and FAMILY ornaments. It also has 3.2 million little lights, and when one goes, the whole string goes. We have a small tree in our bedroom that has all Snoopy ornaments, and Rex has his own tree with Snoopy lights and his special ornaments. We hang our stockings on the mantle together, with one especially for the cats. The outside is my responsibility, and to be honest, Clark Griswold has nothing on me! I keep telling Becky that I need a separate breaker just for Christmas. We have lights galore, garland on the porch, a wreath on the door and yes.... two inflatable Snoopy figures. Life is good! Our tradition is to decorate the outside the day after Thanksgiving and leave it up until New Year's Day. Becky takes about two days to get the inside just right. Before she can get the big tree up, I have a gift for her wrapped and ready to be put under it. Being the loving husband that I am, every time I see her, I point to the gift and say "I know what's in the box... I know what's in the box". It drives her crazy. This is one of my favorite parts of our Christmas tradition!

I remember one year growing up that Yvonne, John and Carl each had one more gift than I did. I was crushed! How could Santa do this to me? I was good (I thought). My Dad said not to worry, and a few days later I received a package in the mail from Santa. He sent it with a note that he found it in his sled when he got home Christmas morning. It was a replica steam engine that actually worked, and I remember the FUN I had with it. - I still have it today. To me, as a child, Christmas was all about "getting" the gifts, how many, and who got the best one. Today as a husband and a Dad, it's all about "giving" the gifts. To see the look on Rex's face when he opens the one he hoped he would get, and to snuggle

with Becky on the couch and look at the tree in the glow of fireplace light (together with the 3.2 million little lights burning) makes Christmas very special. I thank God for the blessing of FAMILY, which He makes even more apparent during this special season.

In the movie "The Polar Express", young Steven is at an age when he's not sure if Santa is real. Steven takes a trip on a magic train to the North Pole where he meets Santa and gets to pick the first present of Christmas. He chooses a silver bell from Santa's sleigh, and as long as he believes, he will hear the bell ring and know that Santa is real. Sir Knights, a very special silver bell is on my fireplace mantle. I still hear that bell ring today, and I hope that each of you hear it as well. As Christians, and Sir Knights, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As you celebrate Christmas with your FAMILY, take time to watch "The Polar Express" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas" (a tradition in my FAMILY). Snuggle on the couch with your wife or your grandkids and read the story of Artaban, the Fourth Wise Man. Thank God for the blessings he has given you, and most of all, enjoy the magic of Christmas.

I want to thank my dear friend and Grand Prelate Sir Knight John Kleinfelder, KCT for writing the beautiful Christmas message. You can find it in the Prelate's Chapel on the website or attend your Commandey Christmas observance and hear it in person. I extend my congratulations to all the new officers in each Commandery, and especially to our new Commanders.

As January approaches I encourage each of you to "pull your boots up" - it's going to get very busy in our Commanderies!

Finally, from my FAMILY to yours, MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

***In Christ's Name,
Paul E. Wunsche,
Right Eminent Grand Commander***